

## **The Profile of a Gifted Underachiever**

Christian is a gifted 7<sup>th</sup> grader with a failing average in three of his four core classes. In his AIG Language Arts class his semester average is a 68%. His AIG math average is the same. Despite scoring in the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile on the InView exam in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Christian is in danger of repeating the 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

His teachers have had several meetings with him and his parents. In addition to grade concerns, there are also behavior concerns. He often argues with his teachers and refuses to do his classwork. Instead of completing the warm up, for example, he prefers to tear holes in his binder, or he destroys other items that belong to him. In the classroom setting he is either completely unengaged, making inappropriate comments out loud, or joking with another boy in the class. When he does attempt to do his work, he asks repetitive questions. If the teacher is at her desk, he makes several trips to ask questions that the teacher often believes he knows the answer to.

Surprisingly, during any type of competitive activity, he is extremely attentive and focused. For example, he came in second place in our classroom Spelling Bee and was runner-up in the school Geography Bee. He was angry and vocal about the unfairness of each when he did not receive first place. If he were to win, he would wear his victory as a badge of honor. Failing before his peers causes him humiliation; hence, he blames others for the loss. He has been suspended from school twice this year, one of these suspensions involved a fight with another boy.

His teachers have tried to get his parents to sign off in his agenda that they've seen his homework each night; however, they do not consistently do so. In a meeting they once made the comment that if only his teachers were videogame characters and he could attend a virtual school, he would be a straight A student. This is interesting considering that Christian chooses to only complete certain assignments, especially technology related projects. He does not, however, study for exams or complete any other types of assignments.

Christian is one of five children. He has an older brother that is married, a brother that just dropped out of high school, a 15 year old sister, and a 7 year old sister with ADHD. His parents are not married and his three oldest siblings have a different father. At parent-teacher conferences, his father never says a word and spends the entire meeting trying to control Christian's younger sister. His mother often mentions his older brother that just dropped out of high school and threatens Christian that he is traveling down the same path. Christian just shrugs his shoulders, rolls his eyes, and mutters under his breath.

Christian is aware that his teachers care about him. They have had countless meetings with him and his parents. They have tried to give him a special day after school to just sit and do his homework. Currently, he is on a behavior contract. There are consequences and rewards associated with this contract. He has already violated it several times and is about to receive his third consequence, In School Suspension. Christian's teachers want him to care and to reach his full potential, but they are uncertain of how to proceed from here.

1. Why is Christian a gifted underachiever? What criteria do you base this on?
2. If this was your student, what interventions would you attempt with him?